

I am physician and founder of Americans for Health Freedom who supports HB1391.

Medical mandates violate basic human rights. During the pandemic, I witnessed the distress of patients who were forced to choose between employment or an education and injecting a pharmaceutical product in their bodies. I practice in Houston, Texas and had privileges at Houston Methodist Hospital. This was the first hospital in the country to mandate the COVID shots, five months before the federal government imposed them. I had many patients come to me in distress, worried about the risks of taking shots that lacked long-term safety data. Informed consent was ignored during this time, and many of my patients succumbed to the pressure and got the shots against their will. Sadly, I have seen so many resulting injuries; seven percent of my new patients in the first two years following the rollout of the shots came to see me for severe and long-lasting side effects that have been very difficult to treat.

This was a dark time in our country's history and an unfortunate reminder that we need additional protections for the liberties of our citizens. HB1391 strengthens informed consent by protecting an individual's right to refuse a medical procedure, treatment, injection, device, vaccine or prophylactic. All medical interventions involve risk, and a universally understood tenet in the medical profession is that patients should never be persuaded or coerced to undergo any treatment that involves risk. As a surgeon, I am particularly sensitive to this. I've performed thousands of operations, and I've never bounded into the operating room without discussing potential complications - to do so would be blatant malpractice. I've never performed an experimental surgery, lacking long-term outcomes data, but if I were to do so, I would feel ethically bound to discuss the potential risks and be particularly forthright about the unknowns. And if I were going to perform an experimental operation on a healthy person in order to potentially save another person's life, the risks of that operations would have to be exceedingly low - and the benefits exceedingly high - to uphold my oath to "First do no harm." Finally, not once have I told a patient, "If you don't let me do this surgery on you, you will lose your job... or be denied an education.. or be discharged from he military." One simply cannot reconcile medical mandates with respecting patient autonomy.

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Founder, Americans for Health Freedom